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A Farce in 3 Acts

“HELP!”

By

ELIZABETH H. ADAMS

Tullar McAdams

265 WEST 36TH STREET

NEW YORK, N. Y.

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By

Elizabeth H. Adams

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CAST OF CHARACTERS.

<i>Ernestyn Devor</i>	Who tries to solve the servant problem,
<i>Lee Clarendon</i>	Her lover.
<i>Mrs. A. Soshall Kleimer</i>	What her name implies.
<i>Algernon Kleimer</i>	Her son.
<i>James</i>	Mrs. Kleimer's butler.
<i>Marie</i>	Ernestyn's maid.
<i>Genevieve Berkeley</i>	} "Busy Buds."
<i>Katherine Beacon</i>	
<i>Rosamond Arlington</i>	
<i>Carola Boylston</i>	
<i>Lucille Parks</i>	
<i>Mrs. Ada Fellows</i>	Sociological speaker.
<i>Pearl Sybilla Daubs</i>	} Applicants for position at the Devor
<i>Bridget O'Hara</i>	
<i>Hilda Schmidt</i>	
<i>Maggie Murphy</i>	
	home.

Time: Present. Place: Boston.

Act. I. Living-room at Ernestyn Devor's home.

Act II. (Scene 1) Reception-room at Mrs. Kleimer's.

Act II (Scene 2)—Maid's sitting-room at Mrs. Kleimer's.

Act. III. (Scene 1) Same as Act I.

Act III. (Scene 2) Same as Act I.

"Help"

ACT I. SCENE I.

(Home of Ernestyn Devor. End of meeting of "Busy Buds" Society.)
(Enter Ernestyn, leading Mrs. Ada Fellows, speaker of the afternoon, and other members of "Busy Buds.")

Ern. Now that we've had the meeting, let's come in here and have tea and I'm sure Mrs. Fellows will let us ask a few informal questions about her work and any way in which we can help.

(Maid flounces in with tea, cakes, etc. Exit. Ern. passes tea, Lucille Parks helping during talking. She must take care not to pass to or in front of a person who is speaking.)

Mrs. F. Yes, indeed. Any help that I can give you, will in the end help the cause, too.

Gen. Berk. Well, when I come home from the theater in the evening, I see so many girls out talking on the street corners; especially do they stand around the Common. Something ought to be done about that, I think. If we could run community dances or form clubs where the young people could hear good music or enjoy good books, wouldn't that be a help?

Mrs. F. There are a great many places of that sort in the city and yet we cannot reach all of these people. There could never be too many places of clean amusement.

Kath. Beac. Some of them don't want to be improved. They are so unreasonable. But, Mrs. Fellows, I think that "Alcoholism" is even worse than "street girls." Don't you think it would have a good effect on a man who drinks to have some of us speak to him? I think I could help that way. (She preens herself before the mirror opposite her.)

Ros. Arl. But, speaking of the street-girls, Genevieve, dance-halls are the very thing there has been sound criticism of in the papers.

Gen. But we could run a nice quiet one.

Ros. That's the kind that these people won't come to. (Mrs. Fellows smiles approvingly at her.)

Ern. Well, Mrs. Fellows, I wish you could help me. Perhaps you noticed the air of Marie, our maid. I have tried my best to be sisterly and sympathetic with her, but it doesn't do any good. I don't know whether it's my method that is at fault or what, but I certainly am not successful—I don't understand her at all. Can you help me?

Mrs. F. (Who has been glancing at her watch, rises to go and pats Ernestyn's arm.) Just put yourself in her place, my dear, and I'm sure you'll learn to understand and will succeed. Now, I must go. I've had a lovely time; most delicious tea. I'm very glad to have met you young ladies. I hope you will become interested in my work. Goodbye.

Chorus. Yes, indeed. Goodbye.

(Exit Mrs. Fellows.)

Carola B. Isn't she lovely! I am *so* interested! I shall ask Pa for a check tonight. I'll give a lawn party for those poor drunkards. I shall feed them marguerites, fudge and tea and I know that will quench their horrible thirst, for they say that if a man eats candy he won't drink.

Gen. Yes and I'm going to try to help those poor girls on the Common.

Ros. Oh, girls, do let up on this talk. We're getting to be a regular "Ladies' Improvement Society." Let's talk about something cheerful.

Carola B. Take Ernestyn and Lee Clarendon for instance. (*Ernestyn makes gesture of scorn.*)

Lucille Parks. I don't call him very cheerful. I saw him yesterday and he looked as if he had lost his last friend. Ernestyn, if you're so charitably inclined, why don't you put him out of his misery and say "Yes"!

Kath. Beac. But he looks so romantic and sad.

Ern. I am just so charitable that I won't say "Yes" to any man until I can run his home and manage his servants. I've seen enough of girls who have made their husbands' lives miserable by not knowing how to do that sort of thing. That's one reason why I had Mrs. Fellows speak today.

Gen. Well, I know if such a fine man as Lee Clarendon proposed to me five or six times I wouldn't keep him dangling. I'd be afraid some other girl might nab him.

Lucille. You needn't worry about that, Genevieve, Lee Clarendon can't see anybody else as long as Ernestyn is on the same planet with him.

Carola. Girls! Girls! Do you hear? It's almost six o'clock and we'll never get home for dinner.

Chorus. Oh mercy! Is it as late as that? Goodbye, Ernestyn dear. Be good, see you tomorrow, etc.

(*All say farewells. Exeunt. Ernestyn comes back and drops into a chair. She rests her head on her hands, looking at Marie, who is taking out the dishes. Marie holds her head up in the air as she walks out.*)

Ern. (*Meditatively.*) Put myself— in— her— place? (*Excitedly and with determination.*) I will!

CURTAIN

ACT 2. SCENE 1.

(*Reception room of Mrs. Soshall Kleimer, who sits, reading.*) (*Enter James, Butler, at r.*)

James. Girl from the intelligence office, Madam.

Mrs. K. Send her in, James.

(*Exit James at l. Re-enter with Ernestyn Devor.*) (*Exit James at r.*)

Mrs. K. Be seated. You have come to apply for position of second maid?

Ern. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. K. Your name?

Ern. Mary Smith.

Mrs. K. Have you any references?

Ern. (*Starting.*) N-no. (*Brightly.*) I just came from my home down in Maine—near Portsmouth.

Mrs. K. (*Looking through lorgnette.*) Indeed! Haven't I seen you somewhere before—possibly your picture?

Ern. (*Confused.*) Why—er—oh! Perhaps it was in the Boston Traveler. I sent my picture to the beauty contest. I wanted to go to the San Francisco Fair.

Mrs. K. I probably saw your picture there, then. Now, are you honest? Can you serve well? Are you neat?

Ern. (*Gravely.*) I think I can answer all those questions in the affirmative.

Mrs. K. (*Again looking sharply at Ern.*) As to Sunday morning, do you go to church? I'll give you Tuesdays and Fridays off.

Ern. Thank you—and I shan't go to church.

Mrs. K. Well, I must have some one immediately. Could you not stay now? There's a uniform in the sitting-room down stairs. You could have that and you could go for your clothes tomorrow.

Ern. Why—Y—yes, I think so.

Mrs. K. (*Pushing button.*) That is good. (*Enter James at r.*) Show the maid to the kitchen, James. She will stay and you may tell her her duties.

(*Exit James and Mary at r. Enter Algernon Kleimer sheepishly.*)

Mrs. K. (*Looking up disapprovingly.*) Well, Algernon. I thought you were in Cambridge. How is this? (*She presents her cheek indifferently. Algernon gives it a perfunctory peck.*)

Alg. H'lo, Mater, thought I'd just run down to see if—er—you could lend me a little cash.

Mrs. K. Cash? You've had your allowance, haven't you? I'm sure it's a very generous one. It seems to me enough to keep you moving in the right set. It certainly must be as much as Charles Blueblood has.

Alg. Well—er—I don't know. I haven't seen Charles for some time.

Mrs. K. Well, whom are you going with, then? Why do you want money if you're not going with those people?

Alg. Oh, I've been taking out some girls and you need an awful lot o' money to sport a girl.

Mrs. K. (*With disdain.*) Who are these girls?

Alg. Their names are Susie Bates and Annie Brown. They live out (*Roxbury*) way. (*The name of any poor suburb may be inserted.*)

Mrs. K. But, my dear, *who* ever heard of *them*? Why don't you go with some of those nice girls, like Rosamond Arlington or Ernestyn Devor? Oh, for a son who had some aspirations, some ideals, some ambitions!

Alg. (*Shrugging his shoulders.*) Oh, those girls!

Mrs. K. (*Almost in tears.*) How dreadful to have a son with no social instincts. I'd give anything to have you care to associate with the right people.

Alg. (*Looking up with an idea; aside*) I wonder how much she would give. (*Aloud.*) I could meet those swells any time, if I wanted to.

Mrs. K. (*Eagerly.*) Why don't you, then?

Alg. Well, I'm kind of tied to Susie and Annie for this blowout, but if I could do it up in shape for them this time, then I could drop 'em and make up to the Awl-ing-ton lady.

Mrs. K. Or Miss Devor?

Alg. Yes—or the fair Ernestyn!

Mrs. K. Er—Algie, er—about how much would this "blow-out," as you term it, cost you?

Alg. (*Airily.*) Oh, about \$200!

Mrs. K. (*Gasping.*) \$200! My dear! (*Short pause.*) Still—if I felt that it was to be the turning point in your career, if I could be sure that hereafter you would seek the company of—

Alg. (*Interrupting.*) I say, Mater, I'll make you a proposition (*rises and walks back and forth, swinging cane, etc. Mrs. K. starts to protest.*) Oh, it's all right, I'll make you a bet—come on now, be a sport! I'll bet you \$200 that inside of six months I'll spend a week-end in Miss Devor's house on her invitation. I need the \$200 now, so you give me a check today and if I win, you've paid me and if I lose—well, I'll—I'll give up that trip to Europe next Fall.

Mrs. K. Oh, but Algie, how coarse!

Alg. No, no, it's all right; I mean it just as a sporting proposition—just for the fun of it.

Mrs. K. (*Ingratiatingly.*) Well, if you insist—you know, Algie, I've always tried to be a good comrade to you, haven't I?

Alg. (*Rising and patting her on the shoulder.*) Sure you have, Mater (*winks at the audience.*) That's the stuff! Well, I've got to hike back to the grind. Be sure and send that check this afternoon.

Mrs. K. Yes indeed.

Alg. Bye-bye. (*Exit at r.*)

Mrs. K. Goodbye, my dear. (*Self-congratulatory, smiling and tapping chest.*) Mrs. Bismarck!!

(*Enter James at r. Cross to left, exit. Re-enter at l. If there is space behind back drop, James crosses behind scenes and enters at l.*)

James. Miss Rosamond Arlington.

Mrs. K. (*Graciously.*) Oh, send her in by all means, James, and at once, James, at once. (*James bows. Exit at l.*) What a shame Algie missed her. (*Enter James and Rosamond Arlington at l.*)

Mrs. K. Ah, Miss Arlington, a pleasure, I'm sure. Do sit down. James! Send up tea by the new maid. (*Exit James at r.*) A delightful day, Miss Arlington.

Ros. Yes, isn't it? I came to ask you, Mrs. Kleimer, if you wouldn't like to contribute something to our (*Insert name of any appropriate local or national relief fund.*) You know what work we are doing and I thought you would be willing to add a little to our sum. The list of contributors will be printed in one of the papers and—

Mrs. K. (*Eagerly.*) Yes, but that is a mere trifle. May I see the list as it stands now? (*Rosamond hands her the list.*) Thank you; (*Reads.*) Ah! ha! Er—My husband will send you a check for both of us. (*She hears Mary coming.*) Here's the tea. (*She turns to the table to make room for the tray.*) (*Enter Mary at r. Rosamond glances at her and stares. Mary recognizes her, shakes her head at her. She puts down tray hastily and places finger on lips. Exit at r.*)

Ros. What a nice looking maid you have. Where did you get her?

Mrs. K. From an Employment Agency on Tremont Street. She said she came from Portsmouth, Maine!

Ros. (Chuckling.) Really? How interesting! (Mrs. K. passes her cup. Enter James at l. Goes through same performance as before according to stage facilities.)

James. Telephone, Madam. Imperative.

Mrs. K. Do excuse me, Miss Arlington. I'll be right back. (Exit Mrs. K. at r. Enter Mary looking cautiously around at l. She comes up to Ros., on tip-toe.)

Mary. Rosamond Arlington, if you dare to tell her who I am or tell anybody that you know I'm here, I'll—I'll never speak to you again! Now promise you won't!

Ros. But, Ernestyn, think of your family and Lee! Why, he got your note and he doesn't know where you are. He's worried to death!

Mary. But he'll understand. He knows I'm safe if he got my note. Now, promise, Rosamond, please!

Ros. Oh, Ernie, I—quick, there comes Mrs. Kleimer. (Mary darts out door at left as Mrs. K. enters at r.) (Ros. gulps down tea hastily.)

Mrs. K. I'm sorry to have kept you waiting. Now about the check—

Ros. Check? What check? Oh, oh, yes, pardon me!

Mrs. K. Now, shall we make it out to you or—

Ros. Yes, to me, I'm the treasurer (rising and passing cup to Mrs. K.) and now I must go.

Mrs. K. Oh, don't hurry.

Ros. Well, I have so many other calls to make I'm afraid I shall have to.

Mrs. K. (Sweetly.) Oh, yes, I see. Do come again.

Ros. Thank you. I enjoyed your tea very much and thank you for your help too. Goodbye.

Mrs. K. (Going to door at l. with Ros.) Goodbye. (Exit Ros.)

CURTAIN.

ACT 2. SCENE 2.

(Maid's sitting-room at Mrs. Kleimer's. James prinking before mirror at b. A table with large cover coming to floor is at right side of stage, a folding screen at left. Enter Mary l., limping.)

Mary. Why, James, what are you doing in here? 'Aren't you rather out of place?

James. Well, to tell the truth, I am, but I thought you'd be tired after serving all those people, so I brewed a cup o' tea for you. Sit down, now, and I'll bring it right in. (Exit James.)

Mary. (Calling after him.) Thank you, James. (Softly.) He's the one bright spot in this awful experience. (Sobs.) I wish I'd never tried it. (Brightening as James enters.) You're such a comfort, James.

James. (Sitting down beside her with tray, which has two cups and saucers and some sugar.) Thank you de—Mary.

Mary. Oh, James, you forgot the cream. Go get that, that's in the jar in the ice-box.

James. (Astonished.) Oh, no! that's Madam's cream.

Mary. Well, then, where's mine?

James. You and I don't have any cream.

Mary. Don't have any? Why, I always have cream in my tea.

James. Sorry, but it can't be helped. (*Bell rings.*) Oh, hang that bell. (*Exit James. Mary takes tray to kitchen at l and returns.*)

Mary. I think that's the limit, not having any cream. I'll put that in my notebook.

(*Enter Lee at r. behind her. Mary starts and turns.*)

Mary. Why, Lee—wh-where did you come from?

Lee. I came from misery at not knowing where you were.

Mary. I'm so sorry, Lee, but (*sighing*) it's doing me worlds of good. Just think how well I can manage mother's maids after this experience.

Lee. (*Stooping to kiss her.*) I wish you'd worry about managing me. (*He is just about to kiss her when he hears the butler coming, whistling.*)

Mary. (*Jumping up.*) Quick, Lee, here comes James. Hide somewhere, anywhere—under the table, quick! (*He dodges under the table. Mary jumps upon it and is swinging her heels and whistling nonchalantly when James enters at l. He goes over and leans against the table beside her, toward rear of stage, with hand on table behind her.*)

James. (*Smirking.*) Little Mary's never told me what her last name is.

Mary. (*Edging away.*) Mary Smith.

James. But I mean your whole name.

Mary. That's all, plain Mary Smith.

James. (*Getting still nearer.*) Possibly Mary Smith, but never plain Mary Smith. (*Lee sticks his head out end toward audience. Mary puts her hand over edge of table and bats him back again.*)

Mary. (*Edging still further away and facing James.*) Yes, really, I always sign my initials P. M. S.

James. Oh, but P. M. S. stands for Pretty Mary Smith. (*James puts his hand under her chin, he makes a dive to kiss her, but she draws back and the kiss falls short.*)

Mary. Oh, stop! (*Lee makes a rumpus under the table and sticks his head out again. James sees him.*)

Mrs. K. (*Outside.*) James! (*Lee looks wildly about; Mary bats his head in again under the table and pushes James behind the screen on the opposite side of stage.*)

Mrs. K. James! (*Enter Mrs. K. at l.*)

Mrs. K. (*Looking around with lorgnette.*) Have you seen James anywhere, Mary?

Mary. I—I heard him in the pantry a little while ago.

Mrs. K. Yes? How do you like your sitting-room here, Mary?

Mary. Oh, I think it's a nice homelike room, but I wish there were a closet or two in it.

Mrs. K. Why, what would you want of closets?

Mary. (*Hesitating.*) Oh, er—to put things in when unexpected callers come in.

Mrs. K. Speaking of callers, Mary, I hope you're not a girl who has followers.

Mary. Oh, no! I haven't published my idea, yet.

Mrs. K. (*Confused.*) I meant, I hope you do not have gentlemen callers?

Mary. Oh, *no indeed!*

Mrs. K. Well, that's good. Now, I must look for James. (*Exit Mrs. K. at l. As soon as she shuts the door behind her, Lee and James scramble out from their hiding places and rush for each other.*)

Lee. You—you masher!

James. You sneak!

Mary. (*Rushing between them.*) Oh, Lee—James, stop! stop! I tell you! James, I'll never speak to you again! Lee, stop—I'll never in this world—

Lee. Ernestyn!

Mary. Go quick! go home, I tell you! (*She pushes Lee out of the door at r. James starts after him. Mary grabs James by the coat-tails. Enter Mrs. Kleimer at l., who stands still, surveying the scene.*)

Mary. James, stop! you mustn't touch my brother!

James. Your—brother! (*He turns on her and as she steps back, they both discover Mrs. Kleimer.*)

Mrs. K. James, what do you mean by this? Go to your own quarters at once. (*Turning to Mary.*) So you are the girl who has no followers! You may leave my service tonight. (*Exit James at l., Mary following slowly.*) Isn't it discouraging trying to get a decent maid. (*She drops into a chair.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT 3. SCENE I.

Same as Act One.

(*Living-room of Ernestyn Devor's home, three months later. Enter Ernestyn, pen in hand. Note. She must brandish pen around so that audience will be sure to see it.*)

Ern. (*Tearfully.*) Oh, dear! Here's Mother in Europe for the Fall and Marie is going to leave at the end of the week. I thought all the ideas I learned at Mrs. Kleimer's were going to help me but I don't see how they have at all. I've tried to be sisterly to her and it doesn't work. I have let her have every evening out. I've given up entertaining the girls because she said it was too hard and I've noticed cream and cakes gone. Oh, it's too discouraging. (*Glancing at clock.*) I should think it was time for some of the applicants from the Employment Agency to show up. (*Starting.*) Oh, joy! I believe there's one now. (*Lays pen on table; fixes hair, straightens up and becomes proper.*)

Enter Marie followed by Pearl Sybilla Daubs. Exit Marie.

Ern. (*With surprise.*) You came to apply for the place of parlor maid?

Pearl. (*Gushingly.*) Yes indeed— isn't it a beautiful day?

Ern. (*Coldly.*) Your name please?

Pearl. (*Not to be crushed.*) Pearl Sybilla Daubs.

Ern. Have you done this sort of work before? (*With back to Pearl she walks to back of stage to fix drapery on window; drops handkerchief as she rises. Should be very lacy showy one.*)

Pearl. Well, not much, but (*Picking up Ern's handkerchief and putting it in muff*) I pick up things quite readily.

Ern. (*Turning.*) Well, your duties would be to take daily care of the parlors, the library and reception room; do the chamber work and answer the door and call-bells. Do you think you could do that?

Pearl. Oh, yes! I'd love to do it in a beautiful home like this.

Ern. Are you strong? Are you sure it wouldn't be too hard for you? (*Looks out window.*)

Pearl. (*Sweetly.*) Oh, I take things very easy (*Picks up gold pen and puts it in muff.*)

Ern. (*Coming back to chair.*) Have you any references?

Pearl. Certainly! Right here! (*Hands envelope to Ern. Ern. reads.*) My former employers show beautiful appreciation. They all say I get onto things so quick. (*Adds silver paper knife to collection in muff.*)

Ern. (*Rising.*) Well, I should like a little time to look up your references, so we'll leave it so that I will call you at the Agency if I want you. Marie will show you out.

Pearl. (*Rising also.*) Yes'm, I think we'd be beautifully suited to each other (*Exit.*)

Ern. Rather a gay flyer, but maybe I can tone her down. She seems willing to work. I'll write her references down before I forget them. (*Starts to pick up pen.*) Why, where's my pen? I know I brought it in with me and laid it right here. Ker—(*starts to sneeze and reaches for handkerchief—sneeze melts away in look of surprise.*) Why, where's that handkerchief? (*Feels in belt; up sleeve, looks under table and over to window.*) I know I had that, too, besides the pen. Yes, I remember fooling with the pen and laying it across that dragon paper-knife. (*Blank look.*) Why, that's gone too. Am I dreaming—or—aha (*look of anger comes over face.*) Miss Pearl Sybilla certainly did have taking ways. I'll call the police and see if they can't do some taking as well. (*Starts "hot foot" for the telephone, but is met by Marie followed by sloppy, dirty Bridget O'Hara.*)

Marie. Something for you, Miss Ernestyn. (*Exit.*)

Ern. Oh! have you come for the position as parlor maid? (*Bridget sinks into chair uninvited. Ern. comes forward and sits.*)

Bridget. Yes'm. Oi hiv thot; Oi want to be a par-r-lor maid, mum—Oi've a great desire to be one. It's one o' thim jobs a loidy kin perfor-r-m widout de-thractin' from her refoinment.

Ern. (*Half laughing.*) But can you perfor-r-um a parlor maid's duties with care? The dusting, you know—

Bridget. Niver fear, mum, Oi've the gintleness of a lamb.

Ern. Well, how much do you want? I generally give five dollars a week. Would that suit you?

Bridget. Yes'm, per-r-rfectly.

Ern. Do you have many followers?

Bridget. Well, mum, Oi can't hilp bein' more or less attrhactive!

Ern. Well, you can have Sunday and Thursday afternoons and evenings out and—

Bridget. Arrah, but Oi must hiv' more thin thot. I niver hiv' less thin three afternoons and every avenin' out, mum. Niver!!

Ern. Oh, I couldn't give you so much time as that because I'd want you to wait on the door.

Bridget. (Rising.) Well, Oi'm sorry, mum, ye same rill plisant, but Oi must hiv the toime to look after me hilth.

Ern. (Pushing button.) Well, I'm afraid we can't agree. (*Enter Marie.*)

Bridget. Good afternoon, Mum. (*Exeunt Bridget and Marie.*)

Ern. (Sighing.) Goodness! but she was awful! I wish they'd send up some decent ones. There must be some good ones somewhere. I believe I'll call the Agency and say that if they can't send me any good ones —(*BELL OUTSIDE*) Oh, there's the bell, I'll see what this one is like. (*Sighs.*) I may have to pay more. (*Enter Marie with most supercilious air possible followed by Hilda Schmidt. Exit Marie.*)

Ern. (Very politely.) Won't you sit down? You seem rather out of breath. It's quite a hill to climb.

Hilda. Ja, it is. I hope you haf un-ach-aut-to-mo-bile got.

Ern. No, well—that is, only a family one.

Hilda. My last Herr—employer let me in his-ach-aut-to-mobile once a week for a ride go and he always me to church took.

Ern. Well, the cars run near here and I'll pay your carfare to church and back, if you wish to go.

Hilda. Ach, I like not street cars, aber, what kind of work must I do?

Ern. Why, take daily care of the rooms on the front of the house, do the chamber work and answer the door bell.

Hilda. Das ist gut, Ja.

Ern. Have you any references?

Hilda. Ja, I haf beautiful ones in mein trunk. Haf you ein Fictrola? I luf musik.

Ern. I think we shall have one this Winter. Now, what pay do you want?

Hilda. Well, I know not whedder I anything here want.

Ern. (Hurriedly.) Oh, well, won't you think it over? I give \$6.00 a week; three afternoons and evenings out. I entertain very little and—

Hilda. Ach, nein, I guess I won't. I would a place like better where they keep ein-ach-au-tomobile. (*Rising.*) Gut day!

Ern. But you can ride in ours if you like.

Hilda. Well, nein, I guess not. (*Ern. rings. Enter Marie.*)

Ern. Marie, show this lady out, please.

Marie. (Glaring.) There's another one waiting, Miss.

Ern. All right, show her in. (*Exeunt Marie and Hilda.*) Oh, dear, she might have been a German spy, but if this one doesn't suit I think I shall fly! I thought they'd want to do everything just as I said. (*Enter Marie and Maggie Murphy. Exit Marie.*)

Ern. Won't you sit down?

Mag. Why, yes, I moight as well. This is a swell place you got up here, ma'am, and do yez have much company in it? I don't like a place when they have too much company.

Ern. No, I don't have very much company and we go away quite a little ourselves. Have you any references?

Mag. Yes'm, Oi've been workin' for Mrs. Sumner Portland. She was a foine woman. By the way, phwat time do yez have breakfast 'ere? I'm not sich an early riser myself.

Ern. Oh, we have it about eight. Are you——

Mag. How much do you pay?

Ern. Why, I have been paying six, but——

Mag. Well, I think in a house as big as this a girl ought to get seven. Do yez expect me to wait on the door?

Ern. (*Gasping.*) Yes. I furnish your uniforms, caps and aprons and——

Mag. All right. I've always had all me evenin's off. How many afternoons do you give?

Ern. Three afternoons besides the evenings.

Mag. That's all right too. Er—how many in the family?

Ern. Just my father and myself, now. Mother is in——

Mag. (*Rising.*) Well, Oi guess that's too many.

Ern. (*Rising also.*) Too many! Why, how many are you used to?

Mag. Foist, Oi worked for a bachelor, then lately Oi've been workin' for an old lady and she died.

Ern. Well, I don't think I can reduce the size of my family. Won't you reconsider your answer?

Mag. No, I guess not. There's no use workin' any harder'n you have to.

Ern. (*Faltering.*) I suppose if you've made up your mind—er—good-bye. (*Exit Maggie. Ernestyn falls into a chair and begins to cry.*)

Oh, dear, what can I do? There wasn't a decent one in the whole lot. (*Enter Marie.*)

Marie. A gentleman to see you, Miss.

Ern. (*Wiping eyes.*) I can't see any gentleman, now. Wait, though, who is he?

Marie. I don't know. He said he was after the job.

Ern. What “job?”

Marie. (*Stamping her foot.*) Shall I let him in?

Ern. (*Wearily.*) Oh, yes, you might as well. (*Exit Marie.*) I saw in the paper the other night that men were working as general house work girls, but I didn't think they would go as far as parlor maids and I suppose that is what this individual is after. (*Enter Marie and Alg. Kleimer, who has on false moustache. Exit Marie.*)

Ern. How do you do?

Alg. (*Sitting.*) Ah, thank you, Miss Devor. Er—er I'd like the job, don-cher-know? (*He stares at her foolishly.*)

Ern. (*Amazed.*) You mean as parlor maid?

Alg. Why, ya-as. I guess so.

Ern. Well, wait, have you had any experience?

Alg. My word, ya-as. I was butler in San Francisco and second girl in—er—Honolulu.

Ern. Did you bring any references?

Alg. Oh, ya-as, one from each of them. (*Passes notes to Ern.*)

Ern. (*Reading.*) This is to certify that John Meek (*to Algie*) that's your name, I take it?

Alg. Er, ya-as. John Meek. (*Ern. continues reading. Alg. gazes around room.*)

Ern. Why, how old are you?

Alg. (*Coming to earth, promptly.*) Twenty-two.

Ern. But each of these former employers claim that you worked for them five years.

Alg. Oh, well, you know Father died when I was twelve; (*Looks at her mournfully*) there were five younger children; mother very consumptive; had to get out and work.

Ern. Oh, how pathetic. I never read better references, but they don't quite say what you've been used to doing.

Alg. I can do anything and everything. Wash dishes, sweep and dust, make beds—

Ern. Well, we'll change chamber work to waiting on the table and you won't be required to do the dish-washing. You would have to answer the door and call bells, too. As for time off, what do you expect?

Alg. Oh, I wouldn't go out often. Once a month, say.

Ern. But how about church—don't you go to early mass?

Alg. No, do you?

Ern. (*Stiffening.*) I meant, do you wish time off Sunday to go to church?

Alg. Oh! why no, thank you.

Ern. (*Softening.*) Very well. How much do you think you ought to get for this position?

Alg. Well, it's worth \$200 to me.

Ern. Er—do—you—er—mean \$200 a month?

Alg. My word, no! \$200 a year—er (*Calculating*) \$4 a week you know.

Ern. Four dollars a week! you can't mean that.

Alg. (*Looking alarmed.*) Why, yes, unless it's too high. Of course out in Honolulu—

Ern. Never mind Honolulu— But— You'll do all these things?

Alg. Oh, yes, and scrub floors, shine your shoes and (*starting forward slightly*) er—manicure your nails.

Ern. (*Smiling and drawing her hands to side away from him.*) Oh, I'm not hiring a lady's maid. When can you come?

Alg. (*Rising.*) Then, you'll really take me? Er—yor' see I've tried so hard to get a job here in the East—

Ern. (*Rising.*) Will you come Saturday?

Alg. Saturday at five?

Ern. Very good. Goodbye. I shall expect you Saturday. Marie will show you out. (*Exit.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT 3. SCENE 2.

(*Living-room in Ernestyn Devor's home, one week later. Discovered: Ernestyn sitting in chair before fire-place at left. Lee leaning over back of chair. Fire gives only light.*)

Ern. Don't you love an open fire?

Lee. (Leaning over her.) If you'd only let me tell you what I love!

Ern. (Cutting in quickly.) So cozy and cheerful. I sit here alone reading a good many evenings.

Lee. (Mournfully.) And I sit alone in my room. *(Puts his hand over hers.)* Think how much better it would be—

Ern. (Jumping from chair and going to r. front table in center.) If we got up and exercised— *(Does a few Swedish arm movements.)* By the way, have you been to the gymnasium lately?

Lee. (Following drearily.) No, I don't seem to care for it somehow. *(Edges around table and tries again to put his hand over hers. Ern. removes her hand just before his can touch it, retires back of table.)*

Ern. Oh, Lee, have—er—you—er—seen this latest book?

Lee. (Following.) No, let's see it. *(Reaches for it. Ern. pushes it toward him and retires behind chair, leaning on back.)*

Lee. Oh, hang the book. (Throws it on table and walks to chair.) Ernestyn, you know what I—*(puts his knee in chair and is just about to capture her when the bell rings.)*

Ern. (Interrupting Lee.) Oh, there's the bell. Callers will be coming in here. Let's go in the library *(hurries out door at left. Lee following quickly. Enter Alg., all dolled up with fancy cap, apron, Lord Fauntleroy collar and cuffs with Mrs. Kleimer at c.)*

Alg. You come right in here, Madam, and I'll call Miss Devor. (Snaps on light, looks at mother, gives gasp of horror, turns and starts for the door.)

Mrs. K. Here's my card. (Holding it out, looks at Alg., for the first time.) My word! (Stares Alg. all over. Alg. wilts.) My soul. It's Algie!

Alg. (In a very weak voice.) Ya-as, Mater.

Mrs. K. What are you doing here? What are those rags? What, what— (Sputters with rage.) What are you trying to make such a fool of yourself for? What? Answer me!

Alg. (Choking.) Yes, Mater.

Mrs. K. Take off that false moustache before you say another word. Oh, the disgrace.

Alg. Hush, Mater, you'll have everybody in the house in here.

Mrs. K. (Sternly.) Explain at once!

Alg. Well, didn't I bet you \$200 I'd stay a week end here at Miss Devor's on her invitation?

Mrs. K. Yes, but why this make-up?

Alg. Well—er—I heard she wanted a maid. I applied for the job and she asked me to come.

Mrs. K. A maid!

Alg. Ya-as, wait on the door and the table and that sort of thing, you know.

Mrs. K. (Loudly.) Algernon Kleimer *(reaches for his ear)* you come right home with me.

Alg. (Dodging.) Ssh! Mater, just consider how near I am to Ernestyn. I put on her rubbers and button her gloves. Oh, I tell you no one's got the inside track on Algie!

Mrs. K. (Suddenly enlightened.) So that's the game, is it?

Alg. It sure is, and believe me, little Algie is a winner!

Mrs. K. (Beaming.) Oh, have matters gone so far?

Alg. (Smiling.) Shall I call her?

Mrs. K. Yes, indeed. (*Exit Algie.*) He takes after his mother so. (*Sits.*) (*Enter Ernestyn quietly at back.*)

Ern. How do you do, Mrs. Kleimer!

Mrs. K. (Turning gradually with ingratiating manner.) Ah, Miss Devor—er—Mary! Why, who are you, Mary or Miss Devor?

Ern. Well, I guess I'm both. I just played maid.

Mrs. K. (Anxiously.) Er—I—hope that you realize that I didn't know who you were when I was so brusque. Indeed if—I—well—

Ern. Oh, yes indeed, that's all right. You see (*becoming confused*) I just wanted—to get—acquainted with—

Mrs. K. (Starting forward.) Why that's just like Algie. You dear girl—

Ern. (Stepping back.) And who is "Algie?"

Mrs. K. "Who is Algie?" Ah, don't try to fool me. I know all about the game.

Ern. The game!

Mrs. K. It is all so clever! Won't you call in your—"maid?"

Ern. If it will help to explain this matter. (*Rings. Enter John, or Algie, with noticeable speed.*)

Mrs. K. Algie, dear, co—

Ern. (Shrieks.) "Algie!" Is he your—

Mrs. K. (Proudly.) My son, Algernon T. Kleimer, Jr.

Ern. Ugh!

Mrs. K. (Not hearing.) Now, Algie, (*low*) have you said anything to her yet?

Alg. (Shakes his head.) Ssh! No, Mater.

Mrs. K. Well, do so now. (*Aloud.*) Now, Miss Devor, Algie has something to say to you. (*Gives Alg. gentle push towards Ern. and turns her back, gazing at picture on wall at r.*)

Ern. (Amused.) Yes?

Alg. Why, why—I, will you—I mean (*looks helplessly at his mother, who pays no attention*). Miss Devor, when I came here it was because—it was with the intention of—I mean (*looks again at mother, who turns and motions him to go on.*) I mean that is—Oh, hang it! Will you marry me?

Lee. (Flinging open door from library l.) What!

Ern. What!

Mrs. K. Oh! Oh! (*Algie stands looking half-defiantly, half hopefully at Ern.*)

Ern. (Beckoning to Lee, who comes and takes her hand.) I am already engaged. (*Mrs. K. sinks into chair.*) Allow me to introduce to you my fiance, Mr. Lee Clarendon.

Alg. Oh! Hel-pp!

CURTAIN.



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